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SERMON BY THE REV. J. M. WAINWRIGHT, D. D.

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A Sermon,

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PREFACE.

THE author of this sermon has been repeatedly asked for it since it was out of print. Upon Mr. Moore's application, he has now consented to republish it in the "PULPIT," in the hope that it may not prove uninteresting or unprofitable to some of the readers of that useful publication, who may not before have seen it. It was his first intention to have remodelled some parts of it, and to have altered some of the notes, in order to make them more in accordance with the present state of the missionary cause in our church. But he has been advised to let the whole appear exactly as it was at first published, in order that it may be seen, how many of the hopes and anticipations of the year 1828 have been realized, and more than realized, at the present time, by the Divine blessing, so auspicious to the glorious cause of missions. God grant that it may go on prospering and to prosper; and that our beloved church, now solemnly proclaimed to be a missionary church, may henceforth be found foremost in the ranks of those who are faithfully striving to proclaim the blessed Redeemer's name, and to publish his salvation to the ends of the earth.

SERMON.

ECCLESIASTES xi. 1, 2.—"*Cast thy bread upon the waters: for thou shalt find it after many days. Give a portion to seven, and also to eight; for thou knowest not what evil shall be upon the earth.*"

THERE is a striking analogy between the spiritual condition of man, and his wants and infirmities as a corporeal being. This analogy is the source of very much of the figurative language of the sacred volume. To be poor, and blind, and naked, is to be destitute of the knowledge, the consolations, and saving faith of the gospel. To be hungry and thirsty, is anxiously to desire these invaluable privileges, and earnestly to seek for their attainment.

Upon such authority I venture to accommodate the words of my text to the interesting subject which you expect will be presented to your notice on the present occasion. The Royal Preacher undoubtedly had reference to the obligation and the advantage of relieving the temporal wants of our fellow-creatures, but we may, I think, discover in the same words an exhortation and an encouragement to alleviate their more urgent and more universal spiritual necessities. THE BREAD OF LIFE we are to cast unsparingly and extensively upon the wide waters of this world's sinfulness and ignorance; we are not to regard it as lost or unprofitably spent because we do not instantly behold its good effects; we are to have confidence in the Divine promise, that after many days we shall most assuredly find it, in its blessed influences upon the perishing nations. According to the measure with which God hath favoured us, we are to give a portion of our spiritual privileges to seven, and also to eight; for we know not what circumstances may be upon the earth, that shall cause our christian benevolence to redound to our own future advantage.

The words of the text thus applied, present to you, my brethren, the outline of a subject upon which I enter with a deep sense of its

importance, and with an unfelgned distrust of my ability to treat it in a suitable manner, but with devout reliance upon the assistance of that Spirit without whom nothing is either strong or holy. May He who inspired prophets to foretell the future glories of the millennial church, who gave tongues of fire and hearts of zeal to apostolic men to proclaim, in every language, the unsearchable riches of Christ; who is the teacher of all spiritual knowledge, the author of all good desires, and profitable labours; may he now be present with us, and so strengthen the preacher, and enlighten the minds and soften the hearts of the hearers, that we may all go from hence, more faithful subjects of King Messiah, more convinced of the blessings of his reign on earth, more resolutely determined to extend the borders of his empire.

Our attention then is to be directed towards the duty of sending forth the Gospel of Christ, as widely as possible, even till it reaches the ends of the earth, and penetrates every desert place upon its wide circumference. Cast thy bread upon the waters. The mighty ocean covers much the largest portion of this world on which we dwell; it can bear about with the greatest facility, and rapidity, and universality the treasures that are entrusted to it; it encircles every island, washes the shores of every continent, and communicates with their deepest recesses by rivers and bays, its majestic arms. Here we find an illustration of the anticipations we are taught to indulge in regard to the extent of Christ's kingdom, and an amplification of the words of prophecy, that "the knowledge of the Lord shall fill the earth as the waters cover the sea." Here also we find the only boundaries which are to limit our thoughts and labours in the sublime cause of missions. The gospel is not to be restricted to one nation, or kindred, or people, —it is destined in its sure and irresistible progress to reach and pervade all. To what extent, as regards individuals, the kingdoms of this world are to become the kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ, whether every living and accountable creature, in any one future age, will be brought to accept the offered terms of salvation, we know not; but of this we are assured, that God designs the gospel to be preached to all, and has appointed a period in the duration of the world when every intelligent being, from the greatest

to the least, shall have the opportunity of knowing the truth as it is in Jesus. Where then are we Christians to limit our prayers, our projects, and our exertions? We do not confine our prayers, —we daily beseech our Almighty Father that his kingdom may come, and his will be done on earth even as it is in heaven. In heaven his will is universally performed, and his name adored by every blessed inhabitant there. Our prayers then reach forth in aspirations after a like universal exhibition of obedience and love here below. But what is the extent of our projects and our exertions? I fear that we shall discover them to be limited, cramped, and restrained. Cold selfishness, and cowardly policy, and lifeless attempts have been too often and too long the characteristics of many of those who call themselves disciples of Christ. When I consider what the missionary cause is—that its design is to communicate to our brethren of the human family who are destitute of them, blessings and privileges which we esteem invaluable and essential; to impart knowledge which we possess to beings like ourselves, who are absolutely perishing for lack of it; and when I consider, that by imparting we diminish not the smallest portion of our own privileges and advantages, I am in utter amazement that this cause is not more zealously promoted. And were it proper to introduce private feelings, I would add, that I am grieved and humiliated that it has not heretofore occupied a much larger space in my own meditations and labours.

We have every motive as enlightened men and sincere Christians to enter into this cause with full purpose of heart, never to abandon or grow cold in it, while powers and opportunities for its advancement shall be continued to us. There is not a single view of it which we can bring forward to excuse our apathy. When called upon to give a portion of this world's goods to relieve the poor, we may sometimes feel that the store we possess is in danger of too great diminution; when we impart to others the knowledge of art or of science that distinguishes us, it may seem that by making them as wise as ourselves, we lessen our own comparative elevation. But to impart spiritual treasures, however freely we give them forth, in no degree diminishes our own wealth; on the contrary, it is thus augmented; our own place in the kingdom of

heaven will not be made lower, though an entrance be abundantly ministered unto others. While, therefore, men are so ready to send the temporal comforts of food and clothing to the hungry and destitute, and while they esteem it a grand and honourable undertaking to spread abroad the lights of human science, and to extend the improvements of civilized society—why should so little interest, in comparison, be felt in communicating spiritual knowledge and consolations? How are we to account for this? Not because the society in which we dwell is destitute of the spirit of benevolence. By no means, such an accusation would be in the highest degree unjust. The spirit of benevolence exists, with few exceptions, in the bosoms of all men. To excite and put it into action, you need only present to their sympathies some case of want or suffering which they can comprehend and realize. Now all may imagine what it is to suffer hunger and cold, and to endure unrelieved and unmitigated poverty,—the more intelligent will easily comprehend and justly estimate the benefits which knowledge and the arts of civilized life have conferred upon themselves and upon the community in which they dwell. These things they understand and can realize, and therefore upon such subjects their sympathies are easily awakened: and we may be assured, that when once men can fully appreciate the advantages of the gospel of Christ to themselves; when once they can say that to them it is more precious than gold and rubies, and that all human science and art are vain and worthless in comparison with it; when once they can feel that it has been the means of rescuing them from the power of that dreadful disease which was palsying virtuous effort, and poisoning present enjoyment, and banishing the hope of life immortal; when and wheresoever all this is felt and appreciated, there will be no difficulty in rousing and keeping in vigorous activity missionary benevolence. Wherever, on the contrary, this benevolence is not felt and exhibited, it is because the power of true religion is not experienced.

Any system of professed christianity which maintains light opinions of human depravity, and softened explanations of the threatenings of eternal damnation, cannot be expected to take a deep interest in the spiritual condition of the human race. When

we notice what we esteem a slight disease, we are not particularly anxious about the means of cure—our remedies are mild and are tardily administered, and we are willing to trust to the healing power of nature. Not so when we observe the symptoms of one of those dreadful maladies which quickly send men to destruction; then we are alarmed and in earnest, and ply vigorously and without cessation every method of arresting it, which science and experience can devise. Similar to this must be the feeling of those who are truly engaged in the missionary cause. Those who entertain different opinions of the extent of human depravity and its consequences, may talk about missions, and attempt to excite among themselves some interest in their favour; but this is in self-defence, and because they are roused by the reproach of lukewarmness. They can have no heartfelt devotion to this species of christian benevolence. It is not simply because christianity will improve the temporal condition of those to whom it is communicated; saving the idolater from moral degradation, and from expensive offerings and sacrifices of human blood; restoring woman to her just privileges, her mild control, and purifying influences, and thus bringing in its train all the benefits of civilized life: it is not on these accounts alone that we are to promote the dissemination of our religion. Great, unquestionably, as are the moral and temporal advantages which accrue to those who are the subjects of missionary labours, this must not be our sole or our principal reason for promoting them. Would we aid missions upon proper and efficient principles, we must aid them because they are means appointed by God for taking perishing sinners from a state of condemnation; for introducing the lost sons of Adam into the flock and fold of Christ; for extending the triumphs of the Redeemer over sin, satan and death; and for peopling the mansions of the blessed with pure and rejoicing spirits, who might otherwise have been the hateful and blaspheming subjects of eternal condemnation and misery. These are the solemn and overwhelming considerations, which present the cause of missions in all its extended importance, which connect it with the awful sublimities of a future world, and which, therefore, are best calculated to rouse the attention of beings acting on their responsibility as immortal. Those

who have not these feelings and views can never be engaged in it, as they should be, heart, mind, soul, and strength. When mere temporal advantages are to be communicated to our fellow-creatures, and moral renovation for the purpose of inducing them to live with greater purity and dignity, "the life of to-day," when these are the only motives that impel us to the missionary cause, it will inevitably be pursued with the caution, the delay, the controlled feelings and views of a worldly policy. Let me know what opinions any set of men hold in regard to the distinguishing characteristic of the gospel of Christ, and I can almost predict, how high the thermometer of their religious benevolence will rise when applied to the atmosphere which envelopes the sin-darkened nations. With the true and faithful missionary, the gospel does not seize hold upon his affections, arm his resolutions, sustain his self-denial, and animate his labours, as the gospel of Christ the moral teacher, Christ the author of immortality, Christ the renovator of religion: No—it is Christ crucified, Christ the atonement for his sins. Christ the only and the all-sufficient means of his restoration to the favour of God and the hope of future blessedness. This is the saying which is worthy of all acceptation, and which he earnestly desires may be accepted of all. This is the gospel which he readily perceives was not communicated for himself alone, but for every creature born in the same state of condemnation with himself. And the gratitude which he feels for his own deliverance, his present consolations and future hopes, while it fills his mouth with praises to God his Saviour, engages his hands and his heart to promote the cause which he knows to be dearest to that Saviour, for which he endured the cross, despising the shame, even the salvation of the world.

In former years the cause of missions was little understood, and therefore, was much misrepresented and violently assailed. But now there are few who are avowedly opposed to it. Every Christian must and will acknowledge that the ignorant and destitute of our own shores, have great and unalienable claims upon our charitable sympathies and assistance, and there are very few who entirely reject and discountenance the petitions of the poor heathen of foreign lands. So much has been said and written to encourage

this holy warfare, such proofs of its justice and expediency have been advanced, and so much ground has actually been gained in it, that pious and thinking men can be indifferent no longer. The animating exhortations of such men as the ardent Melville Horne, and the eloquent and benevolent Chalmers, the self-denying labours of the pious Schwartz, the zealous Buchanan, the judicious Middleton, the devoted and accomplished Martyn, the almost perfect Heber; and in our own country, the cogent appeals and powerful examples of those of other persuasions, in the pulpit and on missionary ground, sanctified and rendered efficient by the Spirit of God, have awakened the slumbering spirit of Christendom, and disturbed the long and disgraceful apathy of our own church. But much, very much, remains to be accomplished. It is one thing to acknowledge the justice and obligation of missionary claims, a far different one to put forth our energies to advance them. This is what Christians of no place and of no denomination have as yet done to the extent which the cause deserves and demands; and certainly we must be content to endure the reproach and mortification of being among the last to enroll ourselves under the banners of this holy warfare. My observation has more especial reference to the case of foreign missions. To aid our brethren at home within the boundaries of our own country, even Christians of moderate zeal and benevolence, have acknowledged to be a duty; and a few flocks have been collected, and a few patches from the vast domains of our western country, have been reclaimed and cultivated for their sustenance. But what have we done abroad? But little, and that little with still less effect.

The idea of sending the gospel to the remote ends of the earth, has been ridiculed by some as a quixotic enterprise; has been discountenanced by some as impracticable; and has been discouraged by others as interfering with more urgent claims nearer at home. Others again object, because the beneficial effects of missions have not, in their estimation, been commensurate with the exertion and expense that have attended producing them. Reasoning from the many disappointments that these enterprises have met with, and from the large sums of money expended in them, they declare that the time has not yet arrived, that we must wait till the state of

heathen nations is rendered more propitious to such attempts by political or other changes, and that while comparatively so little is to be accomplished abroad, and so much remains to be effected at home, our donations and exertions should flow in this latter channel alone. These considerations are not without weight; at any rate, some of them proceed from those whose sincere attachment to the kingdom of Christ, and whose earnest desire to see its advancement, we cannot for a moment question. But surely the claims upon us at home, are not a sufficient apology for utterly rejecting those who call to us for salvation from afar. Cast thy bread upon the waters, give a portion to seven, and also to eight. I doubt not, and no Christian can doubt, that our first and most imperious duty is at home. We are to do good unto all men, but especially unto them that are of the household of faith. He that should cast his whole bread upon the universal ocean of christian benevolence, while his own family are hungry for the want of it, would literally be worse than an infidel: he that should portion off strangers and the heathen, and leave his own relatives to poverty and dependence, would exhibit himself as destitute of the true principles of benevolence, as of the feelings of affection. We could never approve that ostentatious spirit which scatters abroad, and spares and grudges at home: which spends itself in looking at the ends of the earth, while the eye passes carelessly over the intermediate space. Our holy religion unquestionably teaches that charity begins at home; but with equal emphasis, it declares that it does not terminate there. We are each one of us bound to be as extensively useful as possible: we must not exclusively confine ourselves to our own immediate families, nor even to the limits of our own nation: we must ever be alive to the consideration how we can do good according to our abilties and opportunities to the great family of man. By every obligation of duty, by every motive of interest, this spirit of enlarged benevolence is recommended to us. Let us for a moment look at the subject in this light.

The more closely we examine the condition of man in society, the more convinced shall we be of the extent of our mutual connexions and dependencies. So wisely is the order of God's providence arranged, so close has he connected together the hu-

man family, that the relations of man with man are every day growing still more extensive. The most distant parts of the earth are now united by the bonds of mercantile interest and the frequency of social intercourse: every part is constantly becoming more essential to the comfort and well being of every other part. We cannot then be indifferent to what relates to the improvement of any portion of the human race. But I would ask, is this enlarged obligation sufficiently considered or acted upon by men in general, and especially by christian men?—Their responsibilities to the family that depends upon them, and to the friends of their immediate connexion they will readily acknowledge, and for the most part punctually discharge. But here they rest. They view themselves as part of a narrow circle, and not of a grand whole. They will move perhaps evenly and regularly in their own little orbit, but forget that this orbit, with all that it contains, must take its course around a larger one, and this again around another, till we can no longer trace the majestic and complicated system. It is not intended, as before stated, to advocate the principle that a man's contributions and exertions are to be devoted with equal energy and continuousness to objects remote as well as near. By no means. As he approaches the centre of his circle, the more powerfully must his rays be seen and his warmth be felt. But there is no point at which their influence must be checked and drawn in by himself. It is only when other beings are beyond his reach that his duty ceases; then indeed the light of the benevolent man, like that of one of the lesser stars, becomes feeble and undistinguishable, but even then it is not without its effect, for it aids to form that luminous galaxy which encircles the moral firmament. Now if the principle thus briefly illustrated be a correct one: if it be founded in the nature of man, be enforced by his condition in society, and be rendered obligatory by the inferred and the revealed will of God, at what point on the surface of this globe will it authorise us to suspend our exertions and contributions for imparting to our fellow-men that which we esteem our best treasure? What remote island, what secluded valley, what alpine region, where sinful and accountable man inhabits, should we consider as placed beyond our sympathies? None. We may

not think as often, or give as much for them as for our own household of faith, but we must sometimes think and act, and something we must give.

Domestic and Foreign Missions, though they may be distinct in name, though their transactions may be under the control of different bodies of men, (and perhaps for their mutual benefit such a division of labours may be expedient,) yet the cause itself is one and indivisible. That which makes them Foreign and Domestic, is the difference of our civil relations. But what has the gospel of Christ to do with boundaries of kingdoms, or the forms of government, or differences of language, or varieties of feature and complexion? The enlarged and generous spirit of christian love overleaps these boundaries. God who hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth, will the more approve our benevolence the more expansive it becomes, because it then in some degree resembles his own universal goodness. Let not any one imagine that he is the true and enlightened friend of Domestic Missions while his affections are cold to those which have our distant brethren of the human family for their object. In our thoughts, our prayers, and our exertions, they are to be regarded as the offspring of the same principle, just as that is the same charity which gives to the destitute family that lives within sight of our own habitation, and to the unfortunate being plundered and wounded, and left for dead on the road side, whom we casually encounter while on a distant journey. We could not innocently pass by the latter with neglect, for he also is our neighbour in the view of christian duty.

But although the general principle may be allowed, there are some who may be disposed to deny its *immediate* application to the heathen world, and to urge as a reason for longer delay the little that has been effected there, and the discouraging prospects it even now presents to our view. Of those who assert this objection, and thus reason themselves into a state of indifference, it may be demanded, is not the precept, "Go preach the gospel to every creature," plain, direct and untrammelled with restrictions or limitations? Are we to wait for another command as the signal to go forth? Have we any right to expect another? Did the apostles

and missionaries of the church in its infant age remain within the walls of Jerusalem, or even within the confines of Judea? No. When the church was once established, and its triple order arranged and organized by divine suggestion, it became the settled plan and determination of its counsels to overspread the earth with the doctrine of the cross. The isles of Greece, the shores of Asia, refined Athens, imperial Rome, uncivilized Britain, remotest India, these were the fields of missionary labour ere a century had elapsed from the going forth of the great commandment—preach the gospel. Had Christians in after ages possessed but half the portion of this apostolic zeal which distinguished the church while in its age of infancy, in eighteen centuries there would not have been a place on the whole earth ignorant of the name of Christ.

But the plea and excuse of the spiritual destitution of our brethren at home returns upon us. Let us look again at the conduct of the apostles in this respect. They unquestionably went frequently and far on Foreign Missions. Will it be said that the corrupt and hardened Scribes and Pharisees of Jerusalem, the ignorant and yoke-bound slaves of their burdensome rites and foolish traditions in the regions round about, (which was the field of Domestic Missions to the apostles,) will it be said that this field did not need their attention and cultivation as much as almost any portion of any nation of Christendom needs the labours of Christians of the present day? And when the apostles knew that Jerusalem was to be trodden down of the gentiles, and its wretched inhabitants destroyed or scattered abroad, might they not have found in the prospect of these dreadful visitations a powerful excuse for confining their labours to their own brethren? Yet they were not restricted by these views. They went forth,—quickened by zeal for Christ and love for the souls of men,—they penetrated even to the ends of the earth. Or will it be argued that to them obstacles were less and encouragements greater than to us? Let us make the comparison. The inveterate prejudice, the narrow bigotry or high contempt of Mussulmen,—are these hateful qualities more prominent in them, than they were in Pharisaical Jews of ancient times?—The mild Hindoos are intelligent, are devoted to their superstition, which is supported by antiquity and defended

by learning and taste; but are they by these circumstances placed farther beyond the reach of the gospel than the polished and witty Greeks, or the dignified and philosophical Romans? The Indians of Western America and the isles of the Pacific are ignorant and degraded; the savage hordes of Africa are remote and intractable; but are they less accessible or more barbarous than the furious Gauls, or naked Britons, or inhospitable Scythians?—Or to coast the shores of the Mediterranean in frail barks without compass or chart; was this less hazardous, or an enterprise of less extent, than now to sail in our stately and well ordered ships, guided by experienced skill and the certainties of science? No, my brethren. There is no obstacle to missionary enterprise in the present day, which was not equally formidable to the apostles and early missionaries. There was no encouragement given to them which we do not enjoy in an equal degree. And I will venture to add, we have equal advantages for bringing converts to the faith of Christ, had we but their zeal and devotion. They indeed wrought miracles, they spake with foreign tongues, they were inspired teachers: but we have the arts of civilization which arouse the attention and command the respect of the ignorant Heathen like miracles; we have time and facilities to learn foreign languages which were denied to the apostles; and the preaching of the gospel, if it be not from inspired lips, yet if these lips faithfully declare the truths of inspiration, the spirit of God will give them entrance into the heart.—Now, as in the days of the apostles, the gospel grows not from the planting of Paul, or the watering of Apollos, but because God giveth the increase.

But why need I argue these points? Argument was the duty of twenty years ago; then was the season of doubt and irresolution with the timid; with the bold, merely the period of anticipation. At the present day, instead of arguing on general principles, we can present the simple and obvious demonstration. We have begun to find that bread which for so many years, and with apparently so little effect, hath been cast upon the waters. Look at what has been accomplished by the missionaries of the South Sea Islands. "Never," as competent and trustworthy witnesses have declared, "never did the gospel obtain a more complete and

glorious triumph over ignorance and sensuality and superstition since the world began." Behold again in the east the seed which was placed but a few years since in the bosom of the earth, which Middleton cherished and Heber watered, and how it flourishes and puts forth its leaves, and yields its fruits, and how the nations begin to resort unto it for healing, and the ancient churches to revive beneath its sheltering branches. Look at this, and be no longer faithless, but believing. But when we would point to what missionary labour has actually accomplished, whose thoughts do not at once turn to trace the unostentatious but decided progress of that band of apostolic men, the Moravian brothers? We look at them and the history of their labours and successes with unbounded respect and admiration. Hence we may derive courage the most abundant. Considering the difficulties that the mission cause has had to contend with, the lukewarmness of its friends, the opposition of its enemies, the absence of concert in its plans, the inexperience of its directors, the want of adequate preparation in its messengers, we cannot reasonably indulge disappointment in regard to its desired effects; we may rather wonder that these effects are made prominent so early. Under the influence of reflections made upon the present state of missions, to me it now appears that there is no place on this earth so remote, no people so barbarous, no superstition so rooted in the affections and prejudices of those who practise it, that may not at this very day, by the very first ship that can be prepared, be made the object of a successful missionary assault. Had we the means and the instruments, the time is always ready. It is to be wanting both in faith and courage to wait for political changes or moral revolutions. The gospel must make its own way, and it is able to do so. If the true priests and levites will only carry the ark of the living God into the enemy's land, they need not fear for its safety; no sacrilegious hand will be permitted to take hold of it for its destruction, and Dagon shall fall prostrate before it.

But the spirit of enterprise once awakened by these views, we acknowledge that its operations must be directed with the utmost circumspection. We should not hesitate because the field is remote, the enterprise hazardous, the prospect of success distant;

but we may require that the plan be prepared by the best experience, and the fullest knowledge of circumstances, and that ample means be collected to put it into thorough execution. To ministers of the gospel, and to all devout Christians in their respective spheres of action, it belongs to excite and to press forward the missionary spirit, and to pour into the missionary treasury of the Lord, supplies so ample that the drafts upon it shall never fail. Upon the Boards and Directors of missionary societies, it is incumbent to look with the eye of enlightened philosophy, as well as christian compassion, over the whole surface of the earth, and see to what points their efforts can be directed with the best prospect of success, and what measures are best calculated to ensure this success. We must acknowledge that most of the disappointments that have attended missionary efforts, and most of the fruitless exertions that are now adduced as an argument against them, have proceeded for want of sufficient prudence and knowledge in their management. Zeal without knowledge will carry us astray; the courage of enterprise without prudence to direct it, cannot be expected to produce successful results. Another consideration is also of importance. While our means and resources are limited, they should not be directed to too many objects. Collect the little tributary streams into one channel, and their force will bear down mighty obstacles; they will reach their way to lands which they can beautify and enrich; but divide them minutely, and disperse them widely upon the arid sands of the desert, and they will be dried up, or sink away, and leave no green traces of their progress.

When we direct our eyes over the whole surface of the globe, in benevolent inquiry for the field which appropriately belongs to us to cultivate, which our past neglect, our present duty, our future interests, unitedly mark out to us as our own, shall we not say that it is Africa, injured, oppressed, degraded Africa? injured, we are willing to believe, through the sin of ignorance in our forefathers; oppressed, that the labours and sacrifices of her children might minister to our comforts and luxuries; degraded, by the yoke of an unjust and cruel bondage, imposed by those who to us were benefactors and parents. Is it not our solemn duty to do away as far as possible the effects of their injustice, to repair the moral evils

which they have caused? And in what better manner can this be done, than by giving to Africans the blessings of Christianity, and preparing for them in their own land "cities of refuge?" Nay, I would demand in what other method can it be done! I can see no other, and imagine no other. But let us with strong and united purpose, engage ourselves in this enterprise, and the good we may accomplish, the evil we may avert, is incalculable. As regards other missionary attempts, we are encouraged to look for a reward although it may be distant; after many days thou shalt find the bread that thou hast cast upon the waters. But here another, and a most solemn and interesting motive is added: Give a portion to seven, and also to eight, for thou knowest not what evil shall be in the earth. The danger that impends over us as a nation, from the increase of our coloured and slave population, we cannot define or imagine. But that by a continuation of our infatuated blindness and criminal neglect it may be awfully great, no thinking man can doubt. To us who are happily exempt from the curse of slavery, this danger is not so immediate; but can we be indifferent to it? By no means. The cause is a common one. The welfare of the members of one family, who should be united in bonds of the closest affection, as they are by the ties of interest, is involved in it. I am troubled and grieved when I hear upon this subject the interests of the south, and the interests of the north conflicting, and the jealousies of one met by the reproaches of the other. It is not the fault of our southern brethren that has entailed this evil upon them: it is not by virtue and prudence alone that we have escaped from it. Let us remember this. Our exemption arises from circumstances that existed long before there was any distinction of principle upon this point; the nature of our climate, and the character of our early population. To triumph in our freedom, as though it were of our own purchasing, is folly and ingratitude; to hold it up as a reproach to our brethren is base cruelty and injustice. As loving brethren, as faithful citizens, as true and benevolent Christians, we should unite, heart and hand, wealth and wisdom, enterprise and prayer, to avert the evils, to redress the injuries, to remove the disgrace consequent upon the introduction of slavery into this western world. To talk of any general or im-

mediate emancipation to the injured sons of Africa, except the freedom which Christ can give, is to talk language, the origin of which is ignorance, the consequences of which are cruel suffering to our brethren and friends. The freedom of Christ then let us proclaim to Africa, and let it be our determination that her sons shall enjoy it. And let her sons too be its heralds. Africa must be civilized and christianized by Africans; but in America must the work be prepared. Here must missionaries be selected and instructed and commissioned. Why should we not have our school of missions for this express purpose, and why should it not be commenced forthwith? For such an enterprise, so fraught with advantages, we have only to make judicious preparations, and to bring forward our demands, and we shall, I am confident we shall, find a general response of sympathy throughout our land, and a willing and abundant contribution. But I find myself an insulated individual, encroaching upon what I have stated to be the appropriate province for the exercise of the united wisdom of missionary boards and directors. I say not the field I have spoken of is the only one. Assuredly not. But I present it now, as appearing to me the one first in duty, and first in importance.

And now, my brethren, having demanded your attention longer, I fear, than I have rewarded it, I must approach the conclusion of my present effort. Weak though it be—far inadequate to the dignity and importance of the subject, I will yet pray the Almighty Spirit to give it his blessing; and I will also, venture to ask for it your prayers. In regard to the cause itself, I have no doubt. It must and will succeed. The triumphs of the cross will be more frequent and more universal, from this time forth, while the world shall endure. We, indeed, and many of our posterity may first disappear from the earth, but the bread of life shall return again to this land from which it has been sent forth. Our children's children will enjoy the christian triumphs, and partake the gospel peace and prosperity we may now prepare for them. The earth is gradually improving, its deserts are reclaiming, its forests are levelling, green fields and smiling villages, the comforts of plenty and the elegancies of art are advancing. In the progress of ages, from our own Atlantic shores to the Pacific, shall be one extended surface, which

the industry of man shall cultivate and beautify, and his enterprise fill with level roads and easy waters of communication. The mysterious centre of Africa shall be known and visited by commercial enterprise. The jealous gates of China shall be thrown widely open, and her wall of separation be cast down to the earth. The wandering tribes of Asia shall rest, and tents and tabernacles be changed into places of permanent abode. Not an island in the universal ocean shall be unknown, nor where man can inhabit shall it be unpeopled or uncivilized. And all this time, shall the gospel be immoveable, shall it be confined within its present narrow boundaries? No, my brethren—for it shall be the chief stimulus to all this enterprise, the principal cause of all these successful results. When our remote posterity shall see the earth tranquil in peace, smiling in joy, and vocal in praise to God, they shall recur with wonder to the history of past times, when wars were in the earth, when heathen superstitions disgraced it, and sacrifices of blood vexed it, and sin every where polluted it; and in deep-felt gratitude they shall say, these are the blessed effects of our father's labours, and of those who engaged with them in the missionary cause. Blessed be their name and their memory! And perhaps we also, to whom these anticipations seem now extravagant, may be permitted to look down and see the earth improving, the reign of peace restored, and the garden of Eden again flourishing in delights. Hasten, O Lord, the time,—revive thy work in the midst of the years, in the midst of the years make known, —henceforth let thy word run very swiftly,—defer not, O our God, until the kingdoms of this world have become the kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ. AMEN.

NOTES.

The observations which follow might have been placed at the bottom of the pages where are found the passages, in the preceding Sermon, which they are designed to illustrate; but it was esteemed better not to interrupt the attention of the reader, and therefore they are given as an Appendix.

1. On page 8 it is stated, that the peculiar and essential doctrine of the gospel, Christ crucified as the atonement for our sins, and the sole author of immortal life, is the one which can alone sustain the missionary, and give success to his labours. We have ample proof of this from well authenticated facts. Who have been truly zealous in this cause, or have actually accomplished any thing in it, except those who maintain the doctrines of grace? As to the influence of these doctrines, look at the following facts, taken from an Essay by one of the most remarkable young men of the present age—too early, alas, removed from his anticipated labours among the heathen. John Urquhart, like Henry Kirke White, was distinguished for early and powerful talents, for an early and assiduous use of them, for early and devoted piety, for an early and much lamented, but a blessed death. See parts of pages 85 and 86, in the first volume of the interesting memoirs of John Urquhart, by William Orme.

"To come then to the facts. The scene of the experiment was the inhospital region of Greenland; and the moral and intellectual condition of the inhabitants was even more barren and dreary than the scenery with which they were surrounded. Here the only plausible system of instruction seemed to be to attempt to teach the savages those truths which are of a preliminary nature. Accordingly the missionaries set to work most assiduously, in telling the Greenlanders of the being and character of a God, and of the requirements of his law. However plausible this mode of instruction may appear, it was patiently continued in for *seven years*, without producing even the smallest effect on those hearts which ignorance and stupidity had rendered almost inaccessible. The first conversion, (as far as man was concerned,) may be said to have been accidental. Some Southlanders happened to visit the brethren, as one of them was writing a translation of the gospels. They

were curious to know what was in the book, and on hearing read the history of Christ's agony in the garden, one of the savages earnestly exclaimed, 'How was that? Tell me it once more; for I would fain be saved.' . . . . . Sometime after this remarkable conversion, the brethren entirely changed their method of instruction. 'They now directed the attention of the savages, in the first instance, to Christ Jesus, to his incarnation, to his life, and especially to his sufferings.' This was the beginning of a new era in a history of the evangelization of Greenland. Conversion followed conversion, till the missionaries could number *hundreds* to whom the message of God had come, not in word only, but also in power."

What a different course of proceeding is this from that which we have heard is attempting in Calcutta, by an interesting native. He has prepared extracts from the New Testament, which, as far as possible, exclude its peculiar and essential doctrines, and represent as the teaching of Jesus, simply and solely the moral precepts he inculcated; and the admirers of this benevolent and learned, though deeply mistaken Hindoo, anticipate from such a mangled and lifeless system, conversions to the faith of Christ. When this system does make converts, and bring a benighted people from darkness into light, and from the power of Satan unto God, we may begin to put some faith in it. But it is impossible; the preaching of Christ crucified is the only preaching that ever did, or ever will, convert the heathen. I doubt whether "the precepts of Jesus," alone, would ever have been "to the Jews a stumbling block, to the Greeks foolishness." This is not the doctrine which first offended prejudice and afterwards vanquished it; thus proving itself "the power of God, and the wisdom of God."

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2. On the same page, the names of several individuals are mentioned, who have distinguished themselves in promoting the missionary cause. Such an enumeration in a discourse for the pulpit, must of necessity be very limited and incomplete. This holy cause can boast of many advocates, eminently distinguished for talents, as well as piety and zeal; many who yet are alive and labouring to serve their master in this way to him most acceptable, and many more whose memories live and flourish, though their bodies slumber in the dust. The missionary course of such men as Martyn and Brainard, has not yet terminated. The spirits of many will be stirred, and the faith of many be strengthened by their

example, and thus through their instrumentality, will the gospel be preached to multitudes of the heathen. Their lives, which are compiled principally from their own journals, are replete with interest as pieces of biography, and are admirably calculated to kindle and keep alive the flame of private devotion. They ought to be, and will be, the inseparable companions of every missionary.

A life of Bishop Heber, prepared in the same manner and with equal ability, would be an invaluable present to the Christian world. In him we see splendid talents, profound learning, cultivated taste, poetic imagination, the loveliness of domestic virtue, saintly piety, and apostolic zeal combining together to form a character "almost perfect." Why, also, should not the crown of martyrdom encircle his brow? He did not, indeed, expire under the axe, or in the fire of persecution; but he counted not his life dear unto himself, and sacrificed it, in abundant labours and courageous exertions in that fatal climate. Two have gone from that most elevated and interesting missionary station—Middleton and Heber; both great and good; both perfectly adapted to their respective work; the former, by his firmness and sound discretion to plant the church—the latter, by his ardour to nourish it; and both were faithful unto death. A longer deferred termination of his responsible duties we may wish for their successor, Bishop James, but a more glorious one we cannot.

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3. P. 13. Within the limits ordinarily assigned to a sermon it would be impossible to represent with any effect the benefits that have actually been derived from the labours of foreign missionaries. Information upon this point is, however, abundant and accessible. The reports of missionary societies and the journals of missionaries, are replete with interesting accounts of the influence of the gospel upon the characters of the heathen, purifying their conduct, elevating their minds, opening to them the prospects of immortality, and at the same time improving, in an unspeakable degree, their temporal comforts. See the Journal of Stewart at the Sandwich Isles, the Moravian Reports every where, any number of the Missionary Herald, and the Journal of Bishop Heber, which we trust will soon be given to the American public.

For the evidence of an immense amount of good accomplished both at home and abroad, and for an illustration of the manner in which the *Church of God* should fulfil its appropriate and solemn duty of disseminating the *Word of God*, see the reports of the

venerable and most excellent *Society for promoting Christian Knowledge.*

Since writing the above, I have had an interesting conversation with an intelligent captain of an American ship, who arrived here but a few weeks since, from the Sandwich Islands. He visited these Islands twenty-seven years ago for the first time, and has since been there as frequently, and perhaps more so, than any captain who has sailed from this country. The account he gives me of the improvement of the natives, is most satisfactory and most encouraging to future exertions in their favour. When he first knew them they were barbarous, half-naked, ignorant, grossly immoral from the contaminating intercourse of dissolute foreigners, and he was in constant fear for his personal safety while on shore; now they are decently apparelled, possess a written language by which they hold a perfect and easy intercourse; the arts, and even the elegancies of civilization are introduced among them, and life and property and commercial intercourse are guarded by judicious laws and regulations. This great change has been accomplished within a few years, and he attributes it entirely to the beneficial influence of the religion carried there by the missionaries.

There may be statements of an opposite nature given by some persons. But can we not easily account for them? When this gentleman first went to the Sandwich Islands, a very lucrative trade was carried on by the Europeans and Americans. The poor Indians in their ignorance, would barter away large quantities of sandal wood, and other commodities, for articles of the smallest value. At present, however, they are so much improved and so well instructed, that they have learned the relative value of their own productions and foreign manufactures, and all hopes of any thing but a fair and honourable trade are done away. Now are there not persons in the world selfish enough, and unprincipled enough, to endeavour to discountenance and bring into disrepute any system which has interfered with their contemptible pecuniary interests? Contemptible indeed, when put in competition with the intellectual and religious improvement, the present comfort and future happiness of thousands of immortal creatures.

The intelligent person who suggested these observations, made one other, which struck me as of the utmost importance to the quick success of missions, and one which, I fear, has been too much neglected by our missionary boards—caution to be exercised in the selection of judicious and well-instructed missionaries. It is a dangerous idea and one which should at once be discountenanced by all who are connected with missionary operations, that

a person, who from some prominent defect in manners, or from dulness of mental powers, is unfitted for ministering at home, may do very well for the heathen provided he has zeal and piety.

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4. Upon the Boards and Directors of Missionary Societies, it is incumbent, &c. page 15.

In the essay which was referred to in note 1, and which, in the memoirs of John Urquhart, vol. i. p. 81, will be found entitled "Dr. Chalmers, St. Andrew's Missionary Society," there are some highly important suggestions upon this point. Dr. Chalmers, as there styled, is indeed a Christian philosopher. The course he pursued at St. Andrews, is worthy of imitation in all our colleges, more especially in our theological seminaries. To collect missionary intelligence industriously, to arrange it judiciously, and to draw inferences from it logically, and thus to arrive with something of the certainty of science, at the best practical means of disseminating the gospel, is certainly an object deserving the attention and labours of every true and enlightened Christian, more especially of those who superintend the preparatory studies of the heralds of the cross.

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5. *African Mission School*, page 16.—The time would not permit me to enlarge upon this important subject, but I refer the reader to Section IV. of an admirable little volume, Hints on Missions, by James Douglass, Esq.—though small in compass, it is large even to sublimity in the views it presents, and the anticipations it throws out concerning the kingdom of Christ on the earth.

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6. Greece might be another interesting sphere for missionary labour. With the fair prospect, and almost the assurance of political independence, with a true church existing there, although decayed and dilapidated like her ancient temples, with prepossessions favourable to this country, through the benevolent interest we have exhibited in her favour, we have every reason to believe, that judicious and able missionaries sent from hence, might accomplish much in reanimating the spirit of true religion in that land, dear to us as scholars by its classical associations, far dearer to us as Christians as the scene of Paul's preaching and labours.

The desolating flood of Mahometan superstition shall be rolled back, and the seven churches of Asia will emerge from it. Would that it might be the honourable privilege of our own pure and apostolic church, to aid in removing the corruptions that have gathered upon them, and in re-building their towers and strengthening their battlements, and making them again the glory of the east, a praise and a name unto the ends of the world! In addition to our exertions in favour of Africa, which is our first duty, we might, if we had true zeal, accomplish something in this cause. One or two able, and learned, and pious missionaries, (for they must be eminent in all these qualities to be really efficient,) could we obtain them, might move the lukewarm, and animate the despondING among the Greek clergy, and produce an intercourse of love between two sister churches, having the common bond of a primitive ministry. But perhaps the expression of such anticipations is premature; we may, however, cherish them in our hearts, and pray for their speedy accomplishment.

In bringing these notes to a conclusion, I find that they have swelled far beyond my expectation, and yet I have said but a small portion of what is present to my thoughts. The subject has constantly opened upon me since I took my pen to write upon it, and new views are constantly appearing to my mind. The cause of Foreign Missions now seems to me connected in the most intimate manner, with the prosperity of our church at home. I do believe, that in no way can we so effectually subserve our own ecclesiastical interests,—exciting and extending among ourselves a pure and self-denying spirit of piety, and an enlightened and ardent attachment to our own distinctive principles, as by planning and labouring, contributing and praying, to make this church known and glorified, as the blessed instrument of communicating spiritual knowledge and spiritual consolations to all people, and kindred, and tongues, that dwell on all the face of the earth. Arouse then, fathers and brethren, ministers and people—as we are a church professing primitive faith and apostolic discipline, let us also be a church exhibiting primitive zeal and apostolic devotion to evangelizing the world; and may Jesus our Lord and Saviour be with us —he hath promised solemnly and faithfully to be with us "alway, even to the end of the world," provided, (and let us all well remember the condition) provided we GO FORTH AND PREACH THE GOSPEL TO EVERY CREATURE.